

LONG ISLAND FORUM



St. Paul's School, Garden City, in 1899

From photo by Hal B. Fullerton

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Frank Golden
Preston R. Bassett
Forrest Conklin

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**THE
 LONG ISLAND
 FORUM**

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FOR LONG ISLANDERS EVERYWHERE

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Contributing Editors

Clarence A. Wood, LL.M., Ph.D.
 Malcolm M. Willey, Ph.D.
 John C. Huden, Ph.D.

AUGUST, 1950

Williamson, Winters Inquiry

I am looking for data about
 John Williamson, 1750—Sept. 28,
 1844, who I understand is buried in
 Stony Brook cemetery, the grave
 being maintained by the local
 D.A.R. I have heard that he was a
 lieutenant in the American forces
 and that he had a daughter Cla-
 rissa, 1795—July 30, 1854, who
 married Silas Winters, 1792—April
 7, 1854.

Jonas Winters was, I believe, a
 son of this couple. I would like to
 know the parents of Silas Winters
 and the name of John Williamson's
 wife. Jonas Winters has been
 written up in the Forum as a suc-
 cessful whaling captain.

We all enjoy reading the Forum
 every issue.

(Miss) May Louise Winters,
 Westhampton Beach.

Pierson, Clark Inquiry

I would appreciate hearing from
 someone who could advise me as
 to the family name of the wife of
 Benjamin Pierson 1652-1731.

Also the family name of the wife
 of Richard Clark, 1632-1697. Rich-
 ard Clark's will mentions that he
 appoints Elizabeth, his wife, as
 executor, but I am unable to get a
 verification of her family name.

Mr. John Clark of Rahway ad-
 vises me that Richard's wife came
 from the Horton family. Mr. Clark
 traces his ancestors back to Richard
 Clark, but I am unable to get any
 documentary proof of same.

Arthur N. Pierson,
 237 Kimball Avenue,
 Westfield, N. J.

Inquiry, Ketcham

Would appreciate any informa-
 tion or guidance towards obtain-
 ing same on the Ketcham family
 of Huntington.

Mrs. A. Smith Petty,
 309 River Avenue, Patchogue.

Whitaker Collection Birthday

When Southold Town celebrated
 its 300th Anniversary in July 1940,

Continued on Page 148

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Burning of the Lexington

FEW SHIPWRECKS in Long Island waters have approached in tragic horror that of the steamer *Lexington* which occurred in the Sound near Eaton's Neck during the early evening of Monday, January 13, 1840. It resulted in the loss of more than one hundred lives, only five persons surviving. It was an especially ghastly catastrophe as the vessel's upper structure was completely consumed by flames before she foundered within sight of many persons on shore who could render no assistance.

Accounts vary as to the actual number of victims and also as to the cause of the fire. It broke out four and a half hours after the steam-driven sidewheeler cleared New York at three P. M. for Stonington, Connecticut, the home of many of her passengers. As floating ice barred her progress through the Sound, the boiler was being pushed to the utmost to obtain the maximum of steam. In the process, it was later reasoned an overheated smoke stack ignited the vessel's woodwork and before being discovered the flames had spread to a deckload of baled cotton.

A freezing wind blasted the blaze into a roaring inferno in a matter of minutes. As one after another the several boats were launched, all overcrowded with passengers, each in turn capsized, throwing its occupants into the icy waters. None could be rescued as the steamer, although headed towards shore was being driven eastward by a strong wind which struck her broadside. The famous artist, William S. Mount, a resident of Stony Brook, was among those who gathered on the beach hoping to lend a helping hand. His eye-witness account, contained in a letter, was as follows:

By *H. P. Horton*

"When the *Lexington* was first seen from Hallock's she appeared to be coming directly for Long Beach and it was the opinion of those present that she would reach the shore in 15 minutes. Under these impressions, two boats were instantly manned with eight men and proceeded out of the

Continued Mount's letter: "One of the boats got beyond the ice and put into the Sound three miles; they say that the steamship drifted very fast and the wind rising, they returned without further efforts." Of the five persons rescued from floating cotton bales, one had an especially grueling experience. Carried eastward many miles on a



Eaton's Neck Lighthouse. From watercolor by Cyril A. Lewis.

harbor with the intention of assisting the passengers to land.

"They had not been gone many minutes when the steamship turned from the shore and moved as if she had no guide, being under the control of the elements."

It was later revealed that the spreading flames had burned the rudder cable, making the vessel unmanageable. With her rudder jammed to one side she began to move in a circle, thus producing a draft from every quarter which drove the fire to all parts of the vessel. As the flames spread, more and more victims were forced to take refuge in the icy waters of the Sound.

large bale of cotton, he was finally seen from New Gully, north of Riverhead, and brought ashore. The cotton bale was also salvaged and this the rescued man had shipped to his textile plant in Connecticut where it was made into shirts. These were sold as "*Lexington*" shirts as mementoes of the catastrophe.

The destruction of the *Lexington* at a time when the public had not yet fully accepted steamers as completely safe for passenger traffic, aroused poets and artists to great heights of imagination. One poem entitled "The Wrecker of Smithtown Bay," by H. W. Rockwell, appeared in the *Knickerbocker Monthly*

Continued on page 153

Reminders

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Visitors Welcome

The General Museum-Library of the Suffolk County Historical Society, at Riverhead, is open daily (except Sundays and Holidays) from one to five P. M.

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Forum

Continued From Page 146

one of the events scheduled on the week's program was the dedication of the Whitaker Memorial Historical Collection in the Southold Free Library.

It was established to honor the memory of the Reverend Ephraim Whitaker, author of "History of Southold; Its First Century", and long pastor of The First Church of Southold Village. Its purpose: to collect material relating to Southold Town.

The Collection of documents, books and pictures has grown steadily, and its 10th Birthday will be celebrated by a program to be given in the Southold High School Auditorium, on the afternoon of Saturday, August 5th, at 3 o'clock. "The Last 50 Years of Our Town's History" will be presented with pictures and music.

Some exhibits from the Collection will be shown, and the public is cordially invited to come.

Mrs. Mary Howell Wells,
Program Chairman.

* * *

The Long Island Forum comes before the television in our home. (Mrs.) Eva Gordon Slaterbeck, Brooklyn.

* * *

Saxton (Sexton), Post, Powell

Information requested on the following:

Parents of THOMAS SAXTON and Margaret Sterling. Will 1808, Jamaica, L. I., six sons, James, Thomas, William, Edwin, Henry and Robert.

Parents and children of ISRAEL SAXTON, m. Anna Hill, August 10, 1752, Smithtown Records.

Parents and children of ISAAC SAXTON of New Jersey, m. Mary Kecey of Huntington, L. I., Oct. 5, 1766—First Church Huntington Records.

Parents and children of WILLIAM SAXTON, Smithtown, m. Doreas Rogers, Huntington, Oct. 30, 1748, Old Baptist Cemetery.

Continued on page 154

Reminders

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Riverhead Boasts First Lady, Too

ANNA Symmes of Long Island became the wife of William Henry Harrison, hero of Tippecanoe and the winner of the Presidential campaign of 1840. She was also the grandmother of President Benjamin Harrison, elected a half century later.

Her maternal grandfather, Captain John Cleves, was the son of George Cleves who was sent in 1637 by Charles II to the New World to investigate the conduct of Governor Winthron. He participated in the Pequot War and later moved from New Hampshire to Lower Aquebogue (now Jamesport). Riverhead town then part of Southold town. A daughter of Captain Cleves married William Terry, a descendant of Thomas Terry who settled early in the same town.

Also came Joshua Cleves, a near relative of Captain Cleves, who married Nov. 22, 1753 Mary Hallock, daughter of Peter and Mary Hallock. She died the following spring. Joshua Cleves subsequently married Experience Petty, daughter of Edward, founder of the Petty family at Oysterponds (now Orient). Their children were Experience, Phebe and Mary, all baptized Dec. 31, 1766, also Jemina and Daniel.

Rev. Timothy Symmes, grandfather of Anna Symmes Harrison, came to Upper Aquebogue (now Aquebogue) about 1738 to serve as pastor of a little church that stood in the burying ground nearly opposite the present Aquebogue church. He was born at Scituate, Massachusetts in 1715. He graduated at Harvard College, as did his father before him and married a daughter of one Rev. Samuel Barker. Father and son were descendants of an earlier clergyman, Rev. Zachariah Symmes, the

By Dr. Clarence A. Wood

second preacher at Charlestown, Massachusetts.

Rev. Symmes and his friend, Rev. James Davenport, Yale graduate and fourth pastor of the First Church at Southold village 1738 to 1746, were "New Light" preachers. Concededly good men, ecclesiastically speaking they are thought to have done harm during their nearly contemporaneous abode at the East End that "many years were required to correct." Like the erratic Southold cleric, Rev. Symmes "burnt out life's candle early", dying at Ipswich about a decade after he left the Aquebogue community, which was before May 24, 1744.

The Cleves and Symmes families were blended genealogically by the marriage in 1740 of Pastor Symmes and Mary, daughter of Captain Cleves, the former Indian fighter. They had two sons, Timothy and John Cleves Symmes, the latter born July 21, 1742.

Early in life John taught school and staked the boundary lines throughout the vicinity of Aquebogue. He married Oct. 30, 1760 Anna Tuthill, the 19-year old daughter of Henry and Phebe (Horton) Tuthill, descendants of early Southold settlers Henry Tuthill and Barnabas Horton. Her Tuthill grandparents had been married in the Horton "Castle" at Southold village. The marriage of John Cleves Symmes and Anna Tuthill was performed by Rev. Nehemiah Barker at Mattituck.

It is of passing interest to note that after the demise of Pastor Barker in his 52nd year his widow Elizabeth, left with a 20-year old daughter, married Dec. 28, 1775, Rev. John Davenport, son of Southold pastor James Davenport. The Rev. John succeeded Rev. Barker both as pastor and husband. They were married by Rev. John Storrs, great-grandfather of Rev. Dr. Richard S. Storrs of Brooklyn fame.

John and Anna Symmes first located on a farm at



AQUEBOGUE'S ANCIENT CORWIN HOMESTEAD

Mattituck. Later he moved to a farm near Morristown, N.J., known during a part of the 8th century as Bottle Hill. Two unnamed daughters born to them are recorded in the books of the Aquebogue church as having died respectively May 6, 1765 and Dec. 5, 1766. Anna Symmes herself died young, July 25, 1776, leaving two daughters Maria and Anna born between 1766 and 1776. Maria married Major Peyton Short of Kentucky in 1790.

Anna Symmes, upon whom our interest is primarily centered, was reared by her grandfather Tuthill and attended Clinton Academy at East Hampton for a time during the first decade of its history while William Payne, father of John Howard Payne, was a teacher there. Subsequently she left Long Island to live with her father. Following him to the then undeveloped West she met and at the age of 20 married Nov. 22, 1795 General William Henry Harrison.

Her father, John Cleves

Symmes, lived several years in New Jersey, became a colonel in the Revolutionary army and was on intimate terms with General Washington. In 1787 he was appointed a judge of the Superior Court of New Jersey. Later having moved to the Northwest Territory, in 1789 he became a judge of the U. S. District Court.

In 1938 the statement was published by the official historian of Suffolk County that Anna Symmes, she who became the wife of the 9th President and the grandmother of the 23rd President, was a native of East Hampton. It is ludicrous to say of Anna Symmes with her Aquebogue antecedents, associations and background that because she attended school at East Hampton, her White House affiliations qualified her for enrollment in the Hampton Hall of Fame on the basis of nativity. Neither the mother nor sisters of Anna (Tuthill) Symmes ever resided at East Hampton, as in the case of Sarah Payne, mother of John

Howard Payne formerly claimed as of East Hampton origin.

From the time of the departure of Rev. John Davenport from the Mattituck church Rev. Benjamin Goldsmith was for many years pastor at both Aquebogue and Mattituck. From 1778 to his death in 1810 he preached alternately at those hamlets. His headstone stands near the east end of the Jamesport burying ground.

A Mattituck lad of the time, Nathaniel Tuthill Hubbard, son of Richard Steers Hubbard, when he was nearly 90 rather irreverently characterized Rev. Goldsmith as a "prosy old crone" who customarily partook of a tippie of straight gin and sugar at a nearby tavern before ascend-

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ing his pulpit; also that he had a "disagreeable way of see-sawing his body while preaching" (Autobiography, p. 19).

Six years after locating at Aquebogue Rev. Goldsmith married in 1766 Sarah (Wickham) Conklin, daughter of Joseph and Abigail (Parker) Wickham. She was the widow of Captain Joseph Conklin of Ashamomogue, between Southold and Greenport. Lydia, daughter of the Goldsmiths, born Aug. 27, 1774, became the second wife of Moses Luther Case. Their son, J. Wickham Case, with Rev. Dr. Ephraim Whitaker, transcribed the Southold Town Records. Their daughter Harriet married Salter Storrs Horton who in 1836 built the Presbyterian parsonage at Southold. Betsey Case married Henry Jennings who conducted a hostelry on Tucker's Lane at Southold, known as Moore's Tavern when the railroad "cars" stopped at that thoroughfare. Another daughter, Mary, married James Overton, grandson of the first Isaac Overton. Jerusha Case married Colonel John Wickham.

Captain and Sarah Conklin of Ashamomogue had two other daughters named Helen and Sarah. There is a tradition that John Cleves Symmes, father of Anna (Symmes) Harrison, after the death of his first wife Anna (Tuthill) Symmes, sought the hand of Helen Conklin of Ashamomogue. An old red tombstone found more than sixty years ago when an outbuilding near her former home at that place was taken down indicates that she died unmarried Sept. 15, 1776 at the age of 25. Her mother, wife of Rev. Goldsmith, died Aug. 23, 1783.

Certain it is that Helen's young sister, Sarah Conklin, repelled the amatory overtures of Widower John Cleves Symmes. To Sarah he penned several long love letters written in a grandiloquent style addressed to "Miss Sally,

Charming Creature". The latest of these epistles bore date July 29, 1779. Anna (Tuthill) Symmes had then been dead three years. Six months later, on Nov. 14, 1780, the Charming Creature became the wife of William Albertson, the ceremony being performed by her father-in-law, Rev. Goldsmith.

Albertson came from west of Riverhead to Aquebogue in search of pasture for his cattle, acquired a farm at Aquebogue and married Miss Sally.

They afterwards moved eastward to Ashamomogue where he came into possession of much Conklin property.

Albertson died in September 1818. Sarah or Sally, his wife, the "Charming Creature" who had jilted John Cleves Symmes of Aquebogue, later the father-in-law of President William Henry Harrison, lived until the eve of the Civil War.

Judge Symmes was thrice married, his second wife being Mary (Henry) Halsey, a widow of Somerset County, N.J., who lived but a few years. He then, while a member of Congress and residing in New York, married Susanna Livingston, daughter of William Livingston of Elizabeth, Governor of New Jersey during the Revolution. She



Horton, Wickham, London, Case House, Cutchogue. Built by Benjamin Horton in 1660.

They lived first in the mansion erected by Joseph Conklin on a beautiful site overlooking Peconic Bay, later in the first brick house built in the town. About 1788 Albertson built a dam and bridge across the mouth of Mill Creek where he erected a water mill a few rods south of the present bridge of the Long Island Railroad.

Their daughter, Mary Albertson, married Thomas Storrs Lester, protege of Senator Ezra L'Hommedieu and one time district attorney of Suffolk County. Charity, her sister, married Hutchinson H. Case, first president of the Suffolk County Mutual Insurance Company. William Al-

bertson was "pretty Susan" of Andre's Cow Chase and died in 1840 at the age of 92. Her sister was the wife of John Jay.

Judge Symmes of Aquebogue origin, father of Anna (Symmes) Harrison, died Feb. 26, 1814 near Cincinnati. As is well known, President William Henry Harrison died in April 1841, one month after taking office. Anna (Symmes) Harrison of Aquebogue nativity, not East Hampton nor New Jersey became the mother of a large family. Her long life of 89 years terminated Feb. 25, 1864 at the North Bend, Ohio, home of her son John Scott Harrison, father of President Benjamin Harrison.

More Old Hotels

Frank Gulden, Islip

I remember some of the famous hostleries of long ago. Father, driving his trotter after big brother had driven the horse a few times, found out brother's favorite road house.

The famous road houses built during the 1800's are about all gone. At Sherman Tweedy's Main Street, Babylon, most any summer afternoon Sherman could be found sitting on the front porch chewing a toothpick. He was fond of horses and had several good trotters.

On Main Street, Bay Shore, the Cortland House was patronized during the winter and spring months by owners of nearby summer homes, a friendly group of folks.

The Dominy House, not far east of the Cortland, was a favorite of the coaching parties from New York. It was a pleasure to sit on the piazza on a summer afternoon watching the horses and carriages go by.

In East Islip, about a half mile east of St. Mark's lane on the north side of Montauk Highway, was Stellenwerf's — a grand old Inn, (where the horse had the habit of turning in).

There were other road houses between East Islip and Patchogue in which village was Roe's, serving delicious beefsteaks and brown October ale.

All road houses were, of course, built close to the road; guess that is why they were so named.

In England, in the days of coaching, just inside the door of the Inns hung a box with a slot in the cover. On it, these words were printed "To Insure Promptness" — from the first letters of the words came the word "TIP."

Could any days be grander than those which Mr. Tooker started us thinking about in the July Forum?

Other popular summer hotels of that era were the Prospect, Shelter Island Heights, Linwood Hotel, Clinton Ave., and the Prospect House, Ocean Ave., both in Bay Shore. The latter was the most famous of them all. It was owned and managed by Commodore John Rogers and his son Frank who later was proprietor of the Brooklyn at Center Moriches. All three of these hotels were destroyed by fire.

Then there was the Austral at Brentwood which is now a part of the Convent of St. Joseph, and The New Point on Grand Central Avenue, Amityville. It was a horseback ride from Bay Shore to the New Point, returning home at night after spending a delightful

summer evening. "Those were the days" — the Lively 80s and the Gay 90s—The New Point still stands.

The Growler Club made up of protesters, guests at the Prospect House, Bay Shore, who did not like the way the bar was run, christened a new boat belonging to George Watts, the "Growler" built about 1885. Miss King, the beautiful daughter of Horatio King, broke a bottle of champagne on the bow.

This after a parade with a band and everything from the Prospect House to the dock at the foot of Ocean Avenue. The "Growler" is still afloat. There was fun and lots of it "in the good old summertime." The sail and the horse days — no movies, no autos, no street lights — "a beautiful girl, a summer night, etc."

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Amityville

Burning of the Lexington

(Continued from page 147)

Magazine of New York. It told of the morning after the disaster when—

The drizzling rain of the hurricane
O'er the cliffs no longer blew,
But a maiden was there, with raven
hair,

And an eye of sunny blue
And her half-burned hands on the
cold sea-sands

As they shone on the morning
sun
Told all that the true old Wrecker
knew
Of the hapless Lexington.

William Nelson Wells, a sea captain who lived in Stony Brook, was among the many who turned to verse. Beginning his poetic version with:

On Monday last at three o'clock
With streamers flying gay,
A steamer called the Lexington
From New York sailed away.

he continued on through a dozen stanzas to end with:

So here I close my mournful lay,
While children yet unborn
Shall to their sons tell the sad tale
And fate of the Lexington.

Among the artists who put the episode on canvas was Nathaniel Currier, then aged 27. He had arrived in New York six years before from his native Massachusetts and opened a lithographing shop at 1 Wall street. His print showing the burning of the Lexington was sold in such numbers throughout the country as to establish a national reputation for the young lithographer and led to even greater triumphs as senior member of the firm of Currier & Ives, famous print makers.

The Lexington was only five years old when she met her end. Owned by Cornelius Vanderbilt and partners, launched in 1835, she had been making regular runs on the Sound from New York to Stonington and other New England points. Following the disaster, an inquest was held and Vanderbilt, a pioneer

in steamboat traffic in local waters, was roundly criticised with other owners for carrying highly inflammable cargoes on the decks of their passenger boats. As Poet William Nelson Wells put it:

The cruel men were all to blame,
The owners of the boat,
To stow their cotton on the deck,
With such a precious freight.

We are indebted to Mrs. Francis O. Collas of Northport for the following data:

Captain Manchester who



First Lifesaving Station, Eaton's Neck.
Built in 1849.

was among the five survivors of the Lexington, commanded the steamer Rhode Island which six years later came to grief within a few miles of the previous disaster.

The Rhode Island, carrying 150 passengers and crew, bound from Stonington, Connecticut for New York, ran into a severe storm on the night of Saturday, November 1, 1846. Off Crab Meadow Beach she suddenly lost her rudder and became almost unmanageable. Nevertheless, Manchester succeeded in easing the ship's drift to the windward side of Cow Neck where anchors were dropped to keep her from pounding upon the nearby rocks.

In this position, still at the mercy of wind and sea, the Rhode Island was sighted by residents of the vicinity home-bound from church about noon on Sunday. Word was sent to Huntington and a group of volunteers brought several whaleboats overland to the shore opposite the steamer.

With Captain Selah Bunce in charge, boats were launched and after many hours everyone aboard the Rhode Island was brought ashore.

Among the rescued passengers was William Dawes Coolidge, a prominent Bostonian who later became Grand Master of Masons of the State of Massachusetts. He was cared for at the Northport home of a brother Mason, Harvey Bishop.

The passengers of the Rhode Island later awarded gold medals to Captain Bunce and the following who assisted in the rescue: John P. Udell, Charles Conklin, John B. Howell, Nathaniel H. Kelsey, William Spriggs and Jacob Jarvis.

Not to be outdone, Columbian Masonic Lodge of Boston sent a medal to Harvey Bishop for having given succor to its member, William Dawes Coolidge and another member by name of Dimmick. This medal has a history of its own. Lost by the recipient, it was found in Boston, returned to the Lodge and sent a second time to Mr. Bishop. In time the medal descended to Harvey Bishop's daughter, Fannie B. Hartt of Northport and later to her daughter, Hattie K. Hartt who became Mrs. Charles H. Waterhouse of Niantic, Connecticut. From the latter it passed to their grandson, Harvey Rasmussen in whose home at Niantic it now reposes.

The Eaton's Neck lighthouse erected in 1798, has seen more than one disastrous wreck. In 1840 the Recide, a packet bound from Boston for New York, came ashore in a blinding snowstorm and all hands were lost. The bodies later recovered were buried near the station. When a West Indies freighter, loaded with coconuts, stranded near the station some years ago, part of its cargo was washed overboard and for some months thereafter the chief dessert in Northport and vicinity was coconut pie.

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Forum

Continued from page 148

Coram, L. I. William died March 20, 1801, aged 77 years, 10 months, 26 days.

Parents of CAPT. WILLIAM SEXTON, m. Nancy Smith. Had son, Richard, born 1800. Have descendants.

Leonard Sullivan,
149 Broadway, New York 6.
* * *

Long Island Book Store

Ira J. Friedman, well known dealer in books, is preparing to shortly open what will undoubtedly be Long Island's largest book store, at 215 Main Street, Port Washington. Mr. Friedman, formerly proprietor of a large book business in New York, moved to Great Neck some years ago with the idea of eventually transferring his business to the island. The Forum wishes him success in this latest step.

* * *

Letter of 1787

A letter penned in 1787 by a young lady student at Clinton Academy, East Hampton, has been forwarded to the Forum from California by Mrs. Alice P. Ray, daughter of the late Orville B. Akerly, one time county clerk of Suffolk County and a leading authority on its history.

Mrs. Ray writes, in part: "This young girl was a member of the well known Goodwin family in Hartford (Ct.) and I think married a Mr. Hopkins, one of whom signed the Declaration of Independence."

The letter of 1787, carefully written and with uniform neatness, would seem to suggest a very prim young lady, no doubt typical of an era when emotional discipline was a more important part of the training supplied by a private school than spelling and punctuation, especially the use of periods.

East Hampton July 26 1787
Honoured and Dear Mama

It was with the utmost pleasure I received your kind letter I assure you it gave me great satisfaction to hear from my friends I suppose you think us homesick by this time but far from that I assure you

We have a number of amiable young Ladies at East Hampton Academy who make our time and studies agreeable I should be exceedingly happy to see you at East Hampton Mrs. Rodman tells me you talk of coming over in August

Continued on next page

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Forum

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should think it would be more agreeable to wait till quarter day which will be the 6 of October.

Please to give my respects to Gramma and duly to Uncle and Complements to all friends as our School is out I must Conclude with wishing you every Blessing this World can afford

from you Dutiful and affectionate Daughter S G
Mrs. Anna Goodwin

* * *

Ezra L'Hommedieu

I am interested in what our ancestors did and accomplished in the early days of our history, especially in the achievements of Ezra L'Hommedieu a part of whose record is so ably expressed in Dr. Clarence Ashton Wood's article appearing in the September issue of the Long Island Forum.

Inasmuch as Ezra L'Hommedieu did so much in forming a solid foundation for the country, I believe there should be some recognition of his work during that trying period. If his name was enrolled in the Hall of Fame, it would certainly be an inspiration to the youth of our country.

Arthur W. L'Hommedieu,
4521 Ogden Avenue, Chicago.

* * *

Long Island Namesakes

In speaking of "faraway places" named for Long Islanders, I am reminded that Brookhaven town in Mississippi was named for his own Long Island town by one of the Jaynes of Setauket.

Kate W. Strong, Setauket.

* * *

That Meadow Island Monument

It took a natural born investigator like Julian Smith, secretary-treasurer of the Nassau County Historical Society, to dig up and

Continued on next page

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Forum

Continued from page 155

present that very interesting account of the little known monument on an obscure island near Jones Beach. I am one boat-owner who is going to visit it this summer. George Presby, Jamaica.

* * *

Thanks, Mrs. Valentine

I wish to express my thanks to Harriet G. Valentine for her fine account of finding relics of the Walt Whitman family. It was an outstanding article in an outstanding publication.

Mrs. Tracy L. Davis, Queens.

* * *

Westhampton Beach History

Bea Rogers, official historian of Westhampton Beach, did a mighty fine thing in telling us Forum readers about her village's past. Were the truth known, many little publicized communities on the island, might show more interesting pasts than some of the larger, better known villages. Keep up your excellent work.

F. E. Merriman, Levittown.

* * *

Liked Whitman Story

Mrs. Valentine added greatly to the world's knowledge of Walt Whitman with her splendid account, "Among Leaves of Grass", in the June Forum. I note that Forum stories are repeatedly listed as outstanding in the quarterly of the New York State Historical Association. The Forum should certainly be a regular monthly "must" on the living room table of those who appreciate Long Island's illustrious background.

Jesse Merritt,
County Historian, Nassau

* * *

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Island's Part in World Aviation

PART XI

PRESTON R. BASSETT

President, Nassau County Historical Society

There were many other smaller Long Island companies making accessories or components for the Air Force program. Edo Company of Port Washington, Liberty Aircraft Products Corp. of Farmingdale, Fairchild Camera Company of Long Island City, Kollsman of Elmhurst, are just a few of the many who contributed to the war effort in the air.

The most noteworthy airplane manufacturing enterprise is, however, the Grumman Aircraft Engineering Corporation of Bethpage. Truly a Long Island story, we must go back to the first air meet at Belmont Park in 1910 to find there among the interested spectators a fifteen-year-old youngster from Huntington who had ridden his bicycle many miles to see the airplane races. His father ran a carriage shop in Huntington. Hence, it was natural that Leroy Grumman, with his aptitude for making things and his fascination with the airplane, should go to Cornell, obtain an engineering degree, plunge into World War I and come out of it a Navy pilot. After a short tour of duty at the Navy aircraft factory in

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Forum

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The Heath-Hen on Long Island Forrest Franklin

The now extinct Heath-Hen which once was numerous and a favorite game bird on Long Island began to disappear, not after the Civil War as some writers have stated but nearly 150 years ago, as shown in a letter written in 1810. The writer, Dr. Samuel L. Mitchill of New York, himself an ardent sportsman, refers to a closed season for the preservation of this species of grouse established by the State of New York in 1791. This closed season, however, extended only from April 1 to October 5, thus permitting the shooting of Heath-Hens on Long Island for nearly half the year and overlapping the spring mating season.

The statute in question, which Dr. Mitchill quotes, mentioned the interior of the island as the best hunting grounds in the State for the species, the area being "without settlements" and being the chief source of cordwood supply for Manhattan. To quote the statute further: "The city of New York will probably for ages derive fuel from these grounds. The best disposition is to let it grow up to forest again. . . . The reproduction of trees and the protection they afford to Heath-Hens would be perpetual."

Nevertheless, Dr. Mitchill expressed as his opinion (in 1810) that Heath-hens, "especially full-grown ones, are becoming less frequent. Their numbers are gradually diminishing; and, assailed as they are on all sides, almost without cessation, their scarcity may be viewed as foreboding their eventual extermination." The Doctor's letter was addressed to the well known journalist Henry William Herbert and was printed in full in Herbert's book, "Frank Forester's Field Sports," published in 1849.

Although in the latter year the Heath-Hen was still being hunted on Long Island, it had by then become extremely rare, foreboding the final extinction of the species which occurred a generation ago when the last known specimens perished on Martha's Vineyard.

Long Island First

In 1907 Eddie Rickenbacher made his public debut in the automobile racing world when he rode with Lee Frayer in the Vanderbilt Cup Race on Long Island.

Methodist Playing Bands

We read about the old time circuit-riders who rode horseback from church to church to do their

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Island's Part in World Aviation

Continued from Page 157

Philadelphia, Grumman joined the Loening Aero Engineering Corporation as General Manager. Grover Loening's company had been located at Long Island City, but he had moved to New York, where he was turning out his well-known amphibians. Here Grumman became acquainted with another Long Islander, Jake Swirbul of Sag Harbor. In 1929 Grumman and Swirbul decided to start their own company on a small scale. They set up in an empty garage at Baldwin, did general repair work, and designed an amphibian boat which could be added to any Navy scouting plane to convert it into an amphibian. With this came the first Navy orders. Expansion caused them to move, first to a hangar in Valley Stream and then a year later, in 1932, to a larger plant in Farmingdale in which Fairchild had been building airplanes and engines. Here a series of successful Navy fighter planes were produced. In 1937 Grumman, again crowded, built and moved into his own plant at Bethpage, a fortunate move, as it gave him just enough time to become established there before the great demand of supplying Navy fighter planes for World War II fell upon them.

From the new Bethpage plant came the first groups of now world-famous "Wildcats", with which the Navy aircraft carriers entered the war. These fighters performed so well that after Pearl Harbor the demand rose immediately to thousands. The Grumman plant expanded from 700 employees in 1939 to 21,000 in 1944. Ninety per cent of these workers were Long Islanders—housewives, farmers, clerks, butchers, gas station proprietors. All were trained in special schools and became efficient participants of one of the most successful and important production feats of the war. The Grumman fighters were feared on all the oceans and turned in such outstanding group records as 223 Jap planes brought down with the loss of only 2 Grummans. During the war the even more effective "Hellcat" was put in production. This was followed by the twin-engined "Tiger Cat", first seen at Okinawa, and the "Bear Cat", which also just reached the fighting before V-J Day. The war ended luckily just as Grumman ran out of names of fighting "cats". Progress did not stop, however, and the year 1947 closed with the announcement of their first post-war airplane, a jet fighter, the "Panther", with a speed of "somewhere over 600 miles an hour".

At about the same time that Grumman moved into Farmingdale, another small company was struggling for existence by trying to create for the Army Air Corps the fastest fighter in the

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Traditions and Folklore

EVERYONE has heard of Captain Kidd and the pig that he captured on Gardiner's Island, as told in the Gardiner family annals. However, it may not be so well known that he made another attempt to obtain fresh pork on nearby Shelter Island. According to Miss Hosford, a descendant of Nathaniel Sylvester who founded Sylvester Manor there, Kidd landed on the island and with his men took possession of two young pigs. Their squeals brought a serving maid to the rescue. She insisted that they drop the pigs at once. Instead, Kidd cut some links from a gold chain and gave them to the maid who took them to her mistress. The latter had watched the proceedings from an upstairs window, much afraid of the outcome. I understand that the gold links are still in possession of the family.

There is a tradition emanating from one of Huntington's well known families, the Conklins, that Captain Jacob Conklin, born in Wiltshire, England, about 1675, arrived on Long Island as an impressed member of Kidd's crew. As Kidd's ship lay in Northport harbor, the story goes, Conklin was sent ashore with others to obtain fresh water. There he took French leave and hid with the Indians until Kidd had departed. Later he bought a large tract of land in the vicinity of Wyandanch where the old Conklin homestead has been called "the rirate house". He also married Hannah Platt of Huntington and they and their children "lived happily ever after".

There is also the story of a mystery ship being scuttled by its piratical prize crew off Long Island many years ago. As a Captain Terry told the

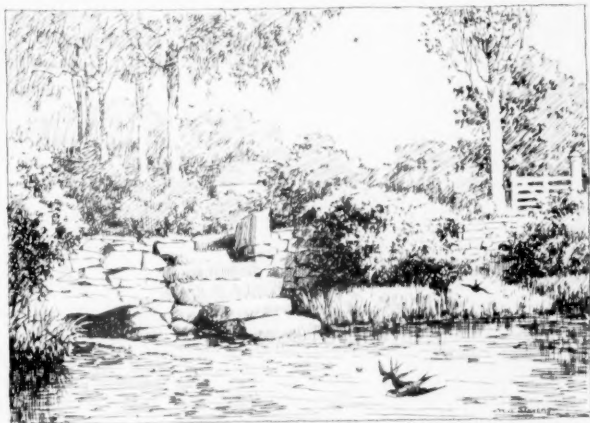
By Kate W. Strong

story to William S. Pelletreau, the historian, the ship first hove to off Napeague Beach one June Sabbath and landed one of its men. He reached Amagansett at dusk, was seen at Southampton and East Hampton and finally employed someone to take him to Fire Island. There he lighted a signal fire one night and soon the ship returned, was scuttled and its crew, laden with gold, started shoreward in small boats. When a squall upset these boats, only three men reached the beach alive. What became of the survivors is not

known but Spanish coins were later found on the beach.

In 1858, according to tradition, the brig *Haidee* was scuttled off Montauk. She was a slaver which had landed 960 slaves in Cuba and had then been sent north with a small crew which was ordered to sink her. Having done this, the crew landed on Montauk, according to the legend, and scattered. I believe some were later caught and arrested.

How thankful we may be that such days are over, when the black flag waved in the wind off Long Island and many lawless men sailed local waters.



Stone Steps of Sylvester Manor House, Shelter Island

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Island's Part in World Aviation

(Continued from Page 158)

world. This company, founded in 1934 by Alexander P. Seversky, a well-known inventor and pilot, also settled in Farmingdale. All during the nineteen thirties, Seversky designed, built and broke speed records with his high-speed fighters. The Army Air Corps bought small quantities of them, but Air Corps appropriations suffered like everything else during the depression years and Army business did not boom.

So, in 1939, the Seversky Aircraft Company was reorganized, refinanced and became the Republic Aviation Corporation. Still sticking to the problem of producing a fast pursuit plane, Republic created and the Army accepted, in 1940, the first P-47, better known as the "Thunderbolt". This airplane became as famous in the Army as the "Wildcat" was in the Navy. Between the years 1941 and 1945, over 9000 Thunderbolts were delivered to the Air Corps by the Farmingdale factory. Republic also employed 25,000 persons at its wartime peak.

The total number of workers who served during the war years in the Long Island aviation plants was 90,000 persons. In 1939, before the war, the total number of employees in those same companies was only 5000 persons. It is to the great credit of Long Island that 84,000 men and women either left non-essential businesses or took manufacturing jobs for the first time in their lives, to help out the local aviation companies in meeting the tremendous responsibilities which were placed upon them by the war.

So Hempstead Plains, for many years familiar with the throbb of airplane engines and propellers, now responds to the roar of jet airplanes, heralds of a new era in the air. At Lake Success, in a portion of the large Sperry plant, Long Island is acting as host to the United Nations. The flags of fifty-seven nations fly from the poles around the oval in front of the administration building. The delegates meet in fine assembly halls constructed in the very space where military airplane instruments were assembled during the past war.

It is hoped that through the United Nations Organization the world, including aviation, can find a way to devote its energies to peaceful pursuits.

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Fashions in August

Whether on the casual or sophisticated side, clothes for end of summer can be equally smart. The dresses seen here were presented by the Traphagen School of Fashion, New York, in a recent style show featuring designs by former students of the school who are now prominent in the New York market.

The dress on the left, with classic, casual lines and important collar and cuffs, is of beige blistered pique, crisp and ideal for August's "dog days." It is one of the popular "Hi-Dee" fashions from the famous house of Horwitz and Duberman. A young dress by a young designer, it was created by Nancy Good, a Traphagen graduate of only three years ago.

The new idea of sheer wool for summer is seen in the town dress



and jacket costume on the right. It's a design by Joseph Whitehead who studied with Traphagen in the earlier days of the School and has been noted for years now as one of America's fashion leaders. Navy blue and thin and light as a feather, this costume looks like a dress with or without the organically collared fitted jacket. Hip bands and bows are divided between skirt and jacket for a continuous effect. The sleath dress itself has a deep, square neckline and brief sleeves which give it a gala aspect.

Among famous designers who have been students at Traphagen are Carolyn Schnurer, Clare Potter, Mary Stevens and many others, some of whom studied evenings or Saturdays while getting their start in fashion.

Two present students, Joan Hart and Rosanne Schmitt modeled the dresses shown here.

Forum

Continued From Page 157

preaching. There were also the old Methodist Playing Bands, a group of five or six men who traveled from church to church to sing hymns, play music and testify to their faith.

I can recall the prime mover of these bands in this part of Long Island. He was I. S. Remsen, a carriage-builder who lived in Jamaica and had his shop in Brooklyn. He organized many of these bands and brought them out to Oyster Bay and Huntington towns. When he was giving his time to this activity, folks used to say that his carriage business must be slack. When he didn't show up, they'd say that his business must be good.

B.F.E., Babylon Town.

Of the Whitman Clan

I greatly enjoyed reading Mrs. Valentine's story in the June Forum, describing her visits to the sites of the old Stillwell and Van Velsor homesteads outside Cold Spring Harbor, and to the Van Velsor burial ground in which Walt Whitman's and my ancestors lie buried. The poet was a first cousin to my grandfather Charles Van Velsor whose daughter Emma was my mother.

I was born at the former Van

Continued on page 162

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LIONS MEET HERE

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Long Island Forum

Forum

Continued from pag. 161

Velsor home and lived at the Charles Van Velsor farm until about 1891. I have sat down to a meal there with my grandfather's famous cousin, for they were very close and good friends. My father, Thomas Ebbets, was a surveyor and we also lived in the nearby house of Jim and Bill Stillwell for a time.

I have seen the family genealogy which Walt Whitman himself compiled of which there were only three original copies.

Benjamin F. Ebbets, Copiague.

Quaker Meeting of 1817

I find in a newspaper of 1817 that a Quaker meeting was held

Continued on back cover

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CLOSED TUESDAYS

Forum

Continued From Page 162

at the home of Henry Scudder in "Cow Harbor" which was described as "large and favoured". From here the group went to Elias Smith's in the western part of Smithtown, then to "the Branch," and on to Stony Brook, later to Setauket, still later to "Hopfrog" and finally to the home of Jacob Harnad near Commack.

These successive meetings consumed the greater part of a week, according to the item, and very likely were held by Hicksite Quakers, who prevailed in that part of Long Island. At that time Elias Hicks, the founder of the Hicksites, was still residing at Jericho and giving much of his time to the movement which he had inaugurated some years before.

(Mrs.) Mabel C. Tompkins,
Chappaqua, N. Y.

Rogers Path, Nassau County

Why is a stretch of road on the north shore to the west of Oyster Bay named Roge's Path? It is so posted or was a few years ago. I am descended from that Rogers family. They seem to have purchased their land from the Indians in both Oyster Bay town and Southampton.

My great-grandfather Joseph Rogers walked to this Ohio country in 1801, aged 12. He came in company with Epinetus Rogers, aged 21, a surveyor. Joseph brought the information that an ancestor was on the Mayflower and that his own older brothers patroled the Long Island coast during the Revolution.

Mrs. Mabel McCaughy,
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